

Truckee Meadows Flood Control Project
Questions and Answers
January 2006

1. I understand the study may not be authorized for construction by Congress any sooner than Fall, 2007. Are there opportunities to finish the study any sooner than Fall, 2007?
 - a. The Sacramento District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers views this project as one of its most important studies and has assigned highly talented technical and professional staff to the project team. The Corps is actively seeking portions of the study that can be done by the local sponsor and will continue to utilize their capabilities to accelerate the study phase.
 - b. Congress appropriated \$3,500,000 in FY2006 for this study. This amount is sufficient to cover all FY2006 activities and the vast, if not all, of the activities in FY2007, when the study is scheduled for completion.
 - c. Many of the remaining study tasks occur in a sequential order. Execution of many of these tasks cannot be done concurrently. Concurrent execution of several significant tasks could compromise the quality and reliability of subsequent, follow-on tasks. Substandard product quality or unreliable data would likely result in further delays to the study schedule and eventually result in increased study costs. There are several peer reviews that occur during the study. These peer reviews can be accomplished much more efficiently and ultimately result in schedule advances and cost savings only if the proper Corps procedures and technical processes are followed.
 - d. One possible opportunity to save time is to decrease the duration of remaining tasks. In some instances, it is possible to decrease the duration by putting more resources on the task and the Corps has done that on the hydraulic modeling work recently completed and will add more resources if there is opportunity to save time. It is important to note that more resources may not result in decreased durations of certain tasks. Some tasks can only be done effectively by one person.
 - e. Another possible opportunity to save time is to assign highly qualified and efficient technical staff to the study team. Sacramento District is committed to ensuring this study has such team members assigned to it and remain assigned to it. The District has additional high priority projects it is working on. Truckee Meadows flood control study has successfully competed with these other projects for attaining the services of some of the brightest and most talented technical staff it has available.
2. The flood of record occurred in 1997 and yet the Corps is still studying the Truckee River and has not yet produced a recommended plan. Why has so much time passed without the Corps completing the study.

- a. The project was authorized for construction by the Water Resource Development Act of 1988 (Public Law 100-76), however the project was deferred in 1991 during preconstruction engineering and design (PED—aka Plans and Specs) when changes in real estate costs made the project economically infeasible. In 1996, Congress directed a General Reevaluation Report (GRR) be conducted to reevaluate the need for flood protection and ecosystem restoration along the Truckee River. A general reevaluation report was initiated in 1997. For several years, there was not sufficient funding to make progress; then for the next several years (1999 to 2001) the Corps worked with the community coalitions to develop a plan they would accept. From 2001 until present, the Corps has been developing and evaluating the local plan at the same time it is developing its own federal plan.

3. What is the process required for the study recommendations to be approved and what is a "Chiefs Report"?

- a. The Corps' Feasibility Study process is governed by its own internal policies and guidance requirements and by legislative mandates and directions given to by Congressional actions. In some instances, congressional directions are in conflict with Corps policy. These conflicts require time to resolve, which can ultimately delay the study schedule. Just one example of a congressional directive and a Corps policy requirement is that a study recommendation must present a proposed solution to flooding that demonstrates it produces net benefits greater than 1.0 to the government. These benefits are sometimes referred as a benefit to cost ratio (benefits, in terms of dollars, must be greater than the cost of building a project). Only Congress can authorize a flood control project with net benefits less than 1.0. Generally, Congress is reluctant to authorize such projects.
- b. A Chiefs Report is a formal document, including National Environmental Protection Act compliance, that is submitted to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA). The Chief of Engineers (a 3-Star General, who has command over the Army Corps of Engineers) reviews Sacramento District's federal plan, as contained in the Feasibility Report, and coordinates with other state and federal agencies to solicit their support of the project. Following this coordination, and signing of the Environmental Impact Statement, the report is submitted to the ASA. The ASA reviews the recommended plan as submitted to him by the Chief of Engineers and he may either accept the recommendations or alter them. The ASA then forwards the report, including any alterations made by his office, to Congress for authorization. Congressional review of the study goes through the complex legislative processes before the recommendations from the

ASA are authorized for construction. Authorization of the project must be followed-up with allocation of funds to build the project.

4. When will the Corps have a Chief's Report?
 - a. The Sacramento District will have a recommended plan during the Fall of 2006. The Chief's Report is scheduled to be completed in September, 2007. Approximately 12 months have been scheduled between the District report and the Chiefs Report to allow for peer review and response to comments, release of the EIS for public review, resolution of public comments on the EIS, and for Headquarter review and coordination of the report recommendations with state and federal agencies. State and federal agency review is critical to the ultimate submission of the report by the ASA(CW) to congress for authorization.
5. When will construction start?
 - a. The sponsor can begin certain flood control construction components and receive credit for such work as soon as the Chief's Report is issued to ASA(CW). The Sponsor also has Congressional authority to implement advanced flood control elements, such as acquisition of real estate which will eventually be needed for the flood control project. Corps-led construction projects would not likely start any sooner then one year following congressional authorization of the project. Congressional authorization could occur in late 2007, therefore construction could start in Summer, 2008. Construction would be done in multiple stages and would likely require 5 to 10 years to fully complete. Congress must fund the start, continuation and completion of the construction phase. Congresses allocation of funds is therefore critical to timely completion of the construction phase.
6. Will Downtown be included as a cost shared feature?
 - a. Our team is evaluating the benefit to cost ratio for the downtown area. As of February, 2006 this evaluation has not yet been completed. We expect to know by the end of March, 2006 whether downtown flood protection, and/or hydraulically efficient bridges, will be part of the federal plan. Whether or not downtown is included in the NED plan, it can be included in the locally preferred plan. Cost sharing of a locally preferred plan is authorized by congressional actions, not Corps recommendations.